PRADHAN: (a) The Govt. has decided to add a length of approximately 11000 kms to the national Highway network in the country.

(b) Details are given in the Annexure. (*See Appendix* 185, *Annexure No.* 29)

(c) Development and maintenance including upgradation of national highways is a continuous process.

(d) The allocations are made State-wise for total national highway length in each State and specific national highway-wise allocation is not made.

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts

1079. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL:Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to set up a separate Export Promotion Council for handicraft items made in small cottage industries;

(b) the total amount of export of handicraft items during the last five years;

(c) the impediments being faced by the handicraft industries and their exporters; and

(d) the details of the plans Government initiated to redress the grievances of exporters of handicraft items?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) For promotion of export of handicrafts and Carpets, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts and Carpet Export Promotion Council are already in existence.

(b) The total amount of export of handicraft items during the last five years is as under:—

Sl. No.	Year	Total export (Rs. in crores).	
1.	1993-94	3797.06	
2.	1994-95	4517.52	
3.	1995-96	4621.69	
4.	1996-97	5594.80	(Provi-
5.	1997-98	6457.69	sional)

(c) The impediments being faced by the handicraft industries and their exporters include: availability of uninterrupted power supply; bad road conditions; classification of artmetalwares for duty drawback; non-introduction of Shatabdi Express on Delhi—Moradabad Section; non-availability of air-strip and five star hotel at Moradabad; need expressed by exporters for some changes in labour laws; closure of many saw mills at Saharanpur etc.

(d) Concerted efforts are bieng made by the Government to redress the grievances of exporters of handicrafts item by taking up their issues with the concerned authorities. The progress of action taken is being reviewed periodically at high level meetings.

Withdrawal of Subsidy from Janata Cloth

1080. SHRI K. R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that last year Government widthdrew the subsidised Janata Cloth Scheme as reported in the news item published in the Indian Express dated 14th November, 1997;

(b) whether the scheme was withdrawn without advance intimation by the Finance Ministry;

(c) whether as a result of this, weavers in several States have lost subsidy amounting to about Rs. 60 crores; and

(d) the action taken by Government to relieve the misery of twenty lakh affected weavers?